



42 Recycling Facts and Statistics

1. Throwing away a single aluminum can instead of recycling it is like pouring out 6 oz. of gasoline on the ground.
2. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours.
3. The EPA estimates that 75% of what Americans throw in the trash could be recycled, but just 25% is. If Americans could improve that number to 35% that would reduce emissions as much as taking 36 million cars off the road.
4. Once an aluminum can is recycled, it can be part of a new can within six weeks.
5. Because so many of them are recycled, aluminum cans account for less than 1% of the total U.S. waste stream, according to EPA estimates.
6. An aluminum can that is thrown away will still be a can 500 years from now!
7. There is no limit to the amount of times an aluminum can can be recycled.
8. Aluminum can manufacturers have been making cans lighter -- in 1972 each pound of aluminum produced 22 cans; today it yields 29 cans.
9. A 60-watt light bulb can be run for over a day on the amount of energy saved by recycling 1 pound of steel. In one year in the United States, the recycling of steel saves enough energy to heat and light 18,000,000 homes!
10. Recycling a single run of the Sunday New York Times would save 75,000 trees.
11. If every American recycled just one-tenth of their newspapers, we would save about 25,000,000 trees a year.
12. The average American uses seven trees a year in paper, wood, and other products made from trees. This amounts to about 2,000,000,000 trees per year!
13. If you had a 15-year-old tree and made it into paper grocery bags, you'd get about 700 of them. A supermarket could use all of them in under an hour! This means in one year, one supermarket goes through 60,500,000 paper bags!
14. The average American uses seven trees a year in paper, wood, and other products made from trees. This amounts to about 2,000,000,000 trees per year!
15. Approximately 1 billion trees worth of paper are thrown away every year in the U.S.
16. Americans use 85,000,000 tons of paper a year; about 680 pounds per person.
17. In 1993, nearly 36,000,000 tons of paper were recovered in the U.S.--twice as much in 1980.
18. The amount of wood and paper we throw away each year is enough to heat 50,000,000 homes for 20 years.

MORE ON BACK!



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19. In 1993, U.S. paper recovery saved more than 90,000,000 cubic yards of landfill space.
20. 27% of the newspapers produced in America are recycled.
21. Each ton (2000 pounds) of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water. This represents a 64% energy savings, a 58% water savings, and 60 pounds less of air pollution!
22. The 17 trees saved (above) can absorb a total of 250 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year. Burning that same ton of paper would create 1500 pounds of carbon dioxide.
23. Recycling plastic saves twice as much energy as burning it in an incinerator.
24. Every month, we throw out enough glass bottles and jars to fill up a giant skyscraper. All of these jars are recyclable!
25. The energy saved from recycling one glass bottle can run a 100-watt light bulb for four hours. It also causes 20% less air pollution and 50% less water pollution than when a new bottle is made from raw materials.
26. A modern glass bottle would take 4000 years or more to decompose -- and even longer if it's in the landfill.
27. The first real recycling program was introduced in New York City in the 1890s. The city's first recycling plant was built in 1898.
28. About one-third of an average dump is made up of packaging material!
29. Every year, each American throws out about 1,200 pounds of organic garbage that can be composted.
30. The U.S. is the #1 trash-producing country in the world at 1,609 pounds per person per year. This means that 5% of the world's people generate 40% of the world's waste.
31. A cloth diaper washed at home costs 3¢ per use. A disposable diaper costs 22¢ per use. The difference can add up; a typical baby will use about 10,000 diapers!
32. On average, it costs \$30 per ton to recycle trash, \$50 to send it to the landfill, and \$65 to \$75 to incinerate it.
33. Americans generate and throw away 9 times as much waste as does a person in Africa or Central America, but we also generate two to three times the amount of waste as people living in industrial countries with a comparable or better standard of living as us.
34. Stack the nearly 19 billion steel cans recycled in 1996 end to end, and you would have a line stretching from here to the moon and back more than three times (based on a can height of 5 inches).
35. Steel cans contain 25% recycled content and are completely recyclable.
36. There are more than 12,000 places to recycle out-of-service appliances across the country.
37. Recycling just one car saves 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,400 pounds of coal and 120 pounds of limestone.
38. It takes about 45 seconds to shred the average automobile into fist-sized pieces of steel for recycling.
39. The steel found in just six cars, when recycled, is enough to build a brand new house, using steel framing of course!
40. Using steel framing to build a house means less waste! In fact, the amount of waste generated at a steel housing construction site would fit into a regular garbage can. And, more importantly, that waste can be recycled!
41. Using recycled steel to make new steel saves energy. In fact, the steel industry saves enough energy in one year to electrically power 18 million homes for one year.
42. The recycling process isn't finished until you buy new products made from recycled content. With steel, you are guaranteed that all new products contain recycled steel - everything from the can of Spaghetti-O's® you had for lunch to the new addition on your house to your new bike.